

**mind at ease (how
can i help?)**

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Summary:

Richie Tozier is not exactly someone u can hold in your arms. The boy is a ball of light, always moving, scattering, jumping off the walls. They all know this.

Eddie Kaspbrak, on the other hand, can be held. If you quiet him enough, explain how it's all gonna go down, how much he clearly needs it; he'll sink like a stone into whoever is near. He puts all his weight onto you, cuddles right up, makes himself at home within your skin. He becomes soft and pliant, and will most likely be asleep by the time you ask if he's comfortable enough.

Or, "what would have happened if Eddie was taken instead of Bev"

1. six of seven

Author's Note:

hi all!

so this is that prompt everyone is doing the “what if eddie was taken instead of bev” prompt.... u know what I'm talking about. idk the beginning is pretty much richie x everyone bc my baby is so scared but then its reddie so do not fear!

disclaimer, i have not read the book, or seen the 3h original version of the movie lol so don't hate me if i do something really wrong, but do let me know.

disclaimer 2 - the stan scene was changed to “””””mimic””””” the book scene where he was seduced by the naked woman in the bath room. Hope that's ok. I just didn't wanna copy the movie exactly.

disclaimer 3 - the idea of eddies mom slapping him comes from [The Infinit One](#), whom i asked and they said i could have it lol

disclaimer 9381937 - thank you for clicking. read n enjoy! luv u all.

He's not actually sure why he'd been slapped. Actually, he should have been the one slapping. *He's* the one who had been tricked into taking medication every hour on the hour and taught to suck on an aspirator every time he felt a tightening in his chest for the last thirteen years. He should be the one dishing out some slaps.

But this is his mother, crying on the other side of the bathroom door, saying *she didn't mean to hurt him, she was only trying to protect him, she did it cuz' she loves him*, and Jesus Christ, seriously? He's fucking fuming. He's all tucked up against the side of the tub with his head between his knees because *fuck!* He feels so betrayed. By the person who is suppose to always look out for him, instead she's only filled him with paranoia and fear. *Fuck!*

“Eddie, sweetheart,” Sonia begs sweetly. Fuck. He really wants his inhaler. Knows it doesn't actually do anything, but he wants it so bad. He hears his mom retreat, footsteps heading away from the hall

bathroom and he figures he can make a run to his room to get it.

He steadies himself, wiping his eyes with his good arm. He didn't notice he was crying.

The gold door handle is cold, he twists it quietly as not to alarm his mom he's leaving. Easily, he slips open the door.

He suddenly feels very cold. Scared. That way you feel when you wake up in the middle of the night in a sweat. He recoils a bit, not being able to decide if he should run to find his fanny pack, or stay in the safety of the bathroom.

Something creaks off to his left, down the hall. He peaks over. "What are you looking for?" Says his mother, but he can't see her. He squints, a slight chill down his spine. "Eddie?" She calls again. *Where is she?*

Then, his fanny pack comes sliding down the hall, from the opposite direction of his mothers voice, and of his room. He looks down at it, and when he looks up, he's faced with that fucking clown again.

He screams, tumbling backwards into the bathroom. The clown doesn't move, he stands slouched in the hall. His head is tilted, outfit greying and dirty. They make eye contact, and Eddie yells for his mother, but no one is coming, no one can hear. Just like in Bev's bathroom. It really is true that most accidents that happen in a house happen in the bathroom.

The clown's arm becomes very long, and he grabs the inhaler from the floor. He looks up again, looking right at Eddie, and Eddie is so terrified he would almost just rather this stupid clown kill him right now instead of playing with him.

The clown takes a step into the bathroom, and Eddie kicks away, but soon, his back hits the tub, and he's cornered. "Here," It says, but it's voice is... just like his mothers? Just like in the hallway. "Take a puff. You'll feel better." The clown gives the inhaler a little shake.

And Eddie screams.

When Eddie's even a moment late, Richie begins to worry. He's been sat on the library steps for a little over a half hour, and still no sign of the little twerp. He figures Mrs. K caught him sneaking out, heard him talking on the phone with Richie and just locked him up again, but something makes him uneasy.

There's no harm in going to have a look, right? Eddie's house is only a minute ride away, so he stands, pulling up his bike and straddling it. He takes off down the road, a little less in the middle this time, just slightly more cautious of looking both ways before crossing.

He drops his bike on the lawn —he's gonna be back out here in a minute anyway— and gives a huge knock. If Eddie's locked in his room, which is at the back of the house, he won't be able to hear, and Mrs. K's hearing is as good as shit, and that damn TV turned up so loud isn't gonna help her hear him pounding away at the door. He stays for a second, six, seven knocks later, before trying the handle. It's open. He shrugs, figures he's been here enough that he can let himself in.

It's dark inside. No lights from the kitchen or dining room, only one room down the hall is lit, which he thinks is the bathroom. To his right, Mrs. K is asleep, also in the dark other than the TV, flashing her with odd colours and shapes.

He roguishly steps inside, careful of his shoes, and climbs the stairs to Eddie's room.

The door is open and he's not in there. Richie tilts his mouth in thought. He glances in the other upstairs rooms before heading back down, and down the hallway. The bathroom with the light on is empty. It kinda stinks, like sewer, which he doesn't think too much into. But when he looks down, he finds Eddie's aspirator. Just sitting there, in the middle of the room. Eddie never leaves home without it. He reaches down, picks it up and pockets it, but something about this

feels weird...

He goes back to the living room.

He grounds himself before giving Mrs. K a tap. "Mrs. K? I, uh, let myself in."

She doesn't move. Her chest is moving, but other than that she's dead to the world. He pushes her arm, hard enough she shakes. "Mrs. K. Where's Eddie?"

She's still unmoving. He kinda starts to panic. "Mrs. K!" He shouts next to her face, shaking her at the shoulder. She begins to move. Head tipping side to side, eyes still closed. Man, she was really asleep.

"I'm sorry to wake you, but, I can't find Eddie?"

Her head tips to the direction of his voice, and her eyes open. They are bright, orange lights, lighting up his face in the dark room. He jumps back. She opens her mouth to smile at him, and... and pills fall from behind her teeth. Small, bicoloured pills, the kind Eddie's always stuffed with. His breathing picks up, and before he realizes what's really happening here, she lets out an inhuman screech. His hands fly to his ears, and he trips backwards running out of the house.

He slams the front door hard. He hops on his bike, almost falling on his face, and makes a B-line to Bill's house.

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"Calm down!" Bill forces, hands up in front of Richie's face. The poor kid is shaking, pacing Bill's living room.

"Look, I'm sorry for what I said, and I will make up for it later but

right now I really need your help because Eddie wasn't at home and his inhaler was on the floor and his mom had like, a whole buncha' pills in her mouth and her eyes were like little lights and I think it was It and I think It's got Eddie!"

Bill can't even process what Richie is yammering about, he talks too fast. Richie always talks fast, but now theres this strange twitch in his voice, something like fear. "The c-clown's got Eddie?" Bill finally asks, cluing in.

Richie nods like, a hundred times. His eyes are wide and frantic. It makes Bill uneasy.

Bill swallows, chest puffing. He runs a hand through his hair. "Okay. W-we need b-b-back up."

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Richie doesn't know how he does it, but suddenly, Bill's got everyone outside. He was too busy freaking-the-fuck-out outside on the porch while Bill did all the phone-calling and pleading. But they're all here, and they've all got their bikes and their game faces on. Except for Stan, which Richie can understand. He hangs close to him on the ride over to the Neilbolt house, trying to thank him for helping, without saying it.

Mike hangs a rope down into the well, helping everyone in. Bill goes first, holding onto the rope and walking down the wall easily. Next is Bev, Richie following soon after. He's careful, because he's really not strong enough to do this, and he knows if he misses the entrance where Bill and Bev are sitting, he won't be able to pull himself back up. As he gets close, Bill reaches out and pulls him in, wrapping his arms around Richie's torso and keeping them there until he's sure Richie is safely in the hole. He wriggles to the back, and watches Bill do the same catch-and-grab to all the other losers. Ben is next, huddling up to Bev once he gets in. Then Stan, who Richie reaches for, and pulls him to sit next to him, and finally Mike, who balances

on the edge of the drain hole, a gun slung over his shoulder, and gives them all a kind smile.

Richie doesn't like this feeling. He wants to run, scream and search for Eddie, but he lets himself hang back, lets Bill lead the pack, as he always does.

"Stay close," Bill tells them once they're in the large sewers, large enough to stand, with a foot of water sloshing at their feet and filling their shoes. God, Eddie would be gagging right now.

They walk through the water, following Bill's flashlight. Mike picks up the back of the group, and Richie hears him turn to watch their backs every once in a while.

He suddenly feels the need to check up on Stan. He spins, but only Mike is standing behind him. He stops, which makes Mike stop too. "What?"

"Where's Stan?" He asks, and Mike's eyebrows pick up. Richie spins. "Stan?" He yells out.

The group stops, everyone looking around to see that he's not near.

Ah fuck.

They start shouting, back tracking, looking. It's really no use, the tunnels are echoing with all their voices. It's only when they all go quiet at the same time for just a moment, that they hear a shout. Richie's heart picks up, too scared of getting separated from more than two friends at a time.

The gang goes back the way they came, and by a rustic red door, heavy metal with huge hinges and a large square handle, they hear him.

Everyone is banging on the door, yelling his name. Ben is pulling hard on the handle, but it isn't until Mike takes a pull too that it opens. They rush into the room — a small square room with a large circular sewer drain in the middle. There's stairs leading to a door, and tucked up in the corner, is Stan.

He's soaked, his curls stuck down to his head, his sweater dripping. Bill goes to him, kneeling and brushing hands over his face. Stan shakes him off, crying and blabbering incoherently, "you left me! You aren't my friends! You left me!"

Richie comes over beside Bill. All of the others following. Richie can't help but reach for him. "Stanny, what happened?"

"The... The lady! She...!" Stan gestures wildly towards the drain the the centre of the room. "The water! She pulled me in!"

"Okay, shhh." Says Bev, sliding in to Stan's shoulder, rubbing his arm. Ben hugs him around the waist while Stan rests his head against Bev's shoulder, letting them hold him, warm him up. Richie is still in front of them, patting Stan's legs. "It's okay." He whispers. "We've got you now."

Bill stands, wandering now. Mike calls for him, but he doesn't listen, and his walk grows into a sprint. "Bill!" Bev yells. "C'mon." She coaxes when he doesn't react to her voice, pulling Stan up, helping adjust him so Ben is holding him, and she takes off running after him. Richie audibly rolls his eyes. Seriously, they're here to find Eddie, whats so hard in just sticking together?

With Mike, Stan and Ben, Richie follows them down the tunnels. They reconnect at the end of the tunnel, where Bill and Bev are starring out beyond it. Richie can't see yet, but when he gets close enough he stops short.

It seems they're in a lair, with a huge fucking pile of toys and bikes and other junk, stacked up into the air, all surrounding a circus car, with "Pennywise the Dancing Clown," painted on the red with white, and surrounding the stack of junk... is...

"Are those..." Richie mutters, unsure.

"The mmm-missing kids." Replies Bill, also quiet.

Richie shakes his head. No, no, no way Eddies up there. No way. He pushes through Bill and Bev and out into the liar. He's frantic, trying to be quiet and careful where he steps, but searching for Eddie, only

a second away from screaming his name when Bev yells, "Richie!"

He spins, and there, where she's standing, pointing up, is Eddie. He's floating about five feet up, staring at the sky where the other kids float like he wants to join so, so bad. Richie feels all the air leave his lungs, so relieved to see him, even if he's floating.

He runs to him, jumping to try and grab him. "Eddie!" He yells out, not noticing Mike lifting Ben to get closer. Ben grabs onto his sneaker, and Mike starts to lower him down. Richie stands in shock, mouth agape as Ben pulls him down. He grabs at his ankle, his knee, soon his waist and then his shoulders. He still floats, lifeless in front of Richie, and this is scarier than it could ever be.

Eddie's eyes are white, face slack in something like peace. He's covered in something wet, and it leaves residue on Richie's hand when he touches him. His usual light is gone, his warmth that Richie had been so looking forward to finding again cold. This is not *his* Eddie. Richie can't help but feel overwhelmed, tears blurring his vision as he touches Eddie's face, his shoulders, smoothing hair off his face.

"Eddie?" He asks, threading his fingers through his hair, brushing his thumbs along his temples. "Eddie." He begs now, giving him a shake. "W-W-Why isn't he waking up?" He stammers, Mike, Ben, Stan and Bev crowd around them. Richie starts to cry, frantically looking from the others, to Eddie between his hands. "Eddie, wake up!" He demands. With his hands holding Eddie's face, Richie starts to sob. "Please," he begs, pressing his face into Eddie's floating chest.

To his left, Bill comes to his side. He pulls Richie's head up, and pulls his hands down to Eddie's sides. Through his dirty glasses and watery eyes, Richie can't see Bill's facial expression, but he tries, watching him closely as he examines Eddie. Then, suddenly, Bill slaps Eddie across the face.

At the same time Richie yells Bill's name in horror, Eddie drops like a stone. Luckily Richie is close enough to catch him as his knees give out. Richie struggles to hold him, and they land in a pile on the ground, Eddie folded up between Richie's knees. Richie grabs him around the shoulders, pulling him to his chest. "Eddie?"

And theres a small sound from Richie's chest, and he leans back to look at Eddie. Then, his head pops up.

Eddie looks up at him, and Richie knows he must look like an idiot; his expression so open and raw as he sees Eddie looking alive, dark eyed, and his usual weight all gathered in his arms. *This*, this is his Eddie. But stupid looking or not, Eddie smiles at him, teary eyed, and whispers, "you came."

Richie doesn't know what that means, but his heart breaks and soars at the same time. "Of course I did, Eddie. Of course." And he drags him back into a tight hug. Eddies face is turned against Richies chest, looking out at the other losers who came to find him. "I'll never leave you again. Never. Never ever." Richie promises, rocking Eddie as he comes back to life.

Eddie lifts his head. Looking around at the others while Richie's arms are a loose sling at his lower back, not letting him get away again.

"Who the fuck slapped me?"

2. when (not) all alone

Summary for the Chapter:

Eddie doesn't want to float.

Or, "what happened to Eddie?"

Notes for the Chapter:

Ok HI GUYS!!!

not a very happy chapter but one i really wanted to add. I fucking love writing this damn clown.

the next chap is a lil longer, but its already started so it'll be up super soon.

thanks for tuning in!

What wakes him, suddenly, is his watch.

His arm is tucked under his head, and his watch beeps in his ear. *Time to take your pills*, is what his mind so helpfully tells him.

The thing that really wakes him, is the fact that he's on the cold ground, in a... something, somewhere... he's never been before.

Sitting up, he finds himself in a large, mostly open room. There's not much around, except for the middle of the room, which looks to be some kind of garbage dump. Tons and tons of junk stacked stories high, but not like actual garbage, more like old kids toys, bikes that look like ones he would ride, clothes, even a full car is stuffed in there. Its dark, but it looks like there may be sunlight coming from above the garbage pile.

He stands, wincing. His *everything* hurts. He rubs at his eyes to try and clear them, and takes a look around. He walks closer to the pile of junk, looking up to find the sunlight.

He does find sunlight, but he also finds... people, kids. Floating. All around the pile. Kids of every age, shape, size, colour, floating. How'd they get up there?? How the fuck are they floating? Eddie gets a shiver down his spine when he remembers the clown telling him he

could 'float too.' Is this the clowns house? Is this were the fucker hangs out and has a beer after murdering all these kids? *Oh Jesus fucking Christ*, he does not want to float.

He backs himself up against the wall, in full panic mode now, and starts to look for his exit. Theres a heavy looking brass door over to his left, and he runs to it. He gives it a yank, as hard as he can, but with this broken arm, and being just generally weak as hell, Eddie can't do much but pull on it like an idiot. He spins. Okay, there's gotta be another way out.

Behind him, there's a banging. Like someone is knocking on the hard metal this whole damn place seems to be made of, but he sees a door. A normal looking door, that for some reason, he couldn't see before. He runs to it, and on the other side, is a friendly female voice calling his name. "Eddie? Eddie Kaspbrak?"

"Yes!" He yells, "I'm in here! Help me!"

The door swings open, and Eddie pushes to get inside, but instead, the woman steps out of the door, and shuts it hard behind her.

She is very tall, extremely thin, with dark eyes, dark hair, and light skin. She wears thick framed glasses that remind him of Richie, and he wishes so much to get back to his friends. He feels a little better now there is someone here to help him.

She gets down on his level by taking a knee. She wears a green skirt and a white top, and Eddie worries of it getting dirty while she's down here.

"Ah." She says, "it's so good to see you. I've been looking everywhere for you." Eddie sighs. That means his mother has been worried. Well, his mother is always worried, but this meant she wasn't mad anymore, and was still herself, worried enough to call for help. The Woman smiles thinly at him. "Let's get you out of here," Eddie sags in relief as the Woman stands up, "and into your new home."

Wait, what? He steps back from her, and she reaches for him.

"We're taking you to a foster home." She says with a smile, her hand

latching onto his arm. "One with parents you've never met. It'll be a fresh start!"

Eddie pulls away. No, he doesn't want that. How did she know he was down here? And who's *we*?

"No," he whispers, "I... I have to find my friends."

The Woman's head tilts. "Friends? What friends?"

"Well, Richie, and Bill, and Stan and Mike... They're probably coming to find me." Eddie murmurs, convincing himself.

"Oh." The Woman looks uncomfortable now. "Them."

"Yeah," Eddie sighs, smiling just thinking about it, "they're probably digging through the tunnels right now to get me!"

The Woman looks at him, her expression different now. "No Eddie. They're not coming."

"But—"

"No." She presses. Her eyes turn yellow. "They aren't coming, Eddie."

Scared, Eddie asks, "how do you know?"

The Woman smiles. "They're dead now, Eddie. The Clown got em'."

Eddie's expression falters, his body tensing. What? She's lying. She's just lying to get him to go with her. Yeah. That's all it is.

But he can't help the fear that swells up in his chest, making him want to run from her, run through that door. Bill said they have to stick together, or the clown will pick them like apples. What if he was right? And while Eddie's been down here, they've all been picked.

"That's right." She cheered. "The Clown picked them all. Bit them like apples." Her expression changes to something dark. "And you're next, Eddie."

He starts to back away from her, but she steps closer to him with every step he takes away. She can read his damn mind. She's in his head. He trips, falling backwards into a pile of sewage. She looms over him, and her eyes become those yellowy dots again. She opens her mouth to smile, and as she does, she vomits on him. Thin, purple liquid, like kool-aid, covers him as he screams and kicks away from her. Seriously, what *the fuck* is going on?

He's struggling to get away from her, while also wiping his eyes and mouth of whatever just came out of her *fucking mouth*, *Jesus Christ!* He manages to crawl a little ways before struggling to his feet. He should run. He should, but he doesn't. He turns, just to look. And the Clown is there.

And he smiles. "Hiya, Eds."

Rage seizes Eddie's body, completely overtaking the fear that hid there before. He looks at the motherfucker, who broke his arm, who tortured his friends, who took Georgie away and fucked up his whole summer, and he just explodes.

"I'm gonna kill you!" He screams. Running at the clown like he'd be able to do something. He hopes the sheer will to run at him confuses him enough, makes him tilt his head and ask why Eddie isn't scared anymore.

But instead, the Clown grasps Eddie round the neck and picks him up. Eddie grabs at his arms, scratching him, kicking him, just like he was taught as a child if a stranger were to every grab him or ask him if he wanted candy from their car.

It does little, because eventually he can't breathe enough to fight, and the fear wells up again.

It leans in and gives him a sniff. "Mmm. You smell delicious. I could just eat you right up!" He cheers, jiggling Eddie in his grip. "Just like I did all your other friends..."

Eddie cries out. "No!"

"Ah, yes!" It snickers. "And they cried so sweetly..."

The Clowns eyes become yellow like the Woman's, and Eddie feels himself start to float. *Ah, shit.* He actually finds himself grasping at the Clown to keep himself from flying away. *No, he doesn't wanna float. He doesn't wanna float.*

"And they cried for you, Eds." It growls. "Cuz you weren't there to save them."

Eddie doesn't know what he's feeling. He's floating, for one, terrified but also pissed, and confused as fuck. He opens his mouth to spit out some curse words when the Clown asks; "who was your favourite?"

It looks at him for an answer, like he could give one with the hand around his throat.

"Is it... Billy?" The Clown teases, "or Bevv?"

Eddie grabs the Clown's wrist, tugging at it.

"Or is it... Richie?"

"Richie..." Eddie sighs with one of his last breathe.

The Clown smiles, drool pouring over his lower lip. "That's so sweet." He says, as the lights in his eyes become brighter, "he called your name too, before he started to float."

With that, the lights over take him,
and Eddie floats too.

Notes for the Chapter:

for anyone who was confused, the woman is suppose to depict Eddie's fear of being separated from his mother, so the woman is a social worker, (I'm terrified of social workers so this worked out good lol)

again, I'm [ghostycas](#) on tumblr and i'd love it if you dropped by!

3. the safety in softness

Summary for the Chapter:

This whole Clown thing turned Richie into a man, and Eddie into a child.

Sometimes, Richie really loves his mom.

She's a bitch most of the time, always drunk, always complaining, telling him straight to his face that she wishes she'd had a daughter instead of him, but for some reason, she's on his side today.

It's probably Eddie. Eddie, who is a "good influence" on him, who always eats all his dinner when he stays for the night, and is over all *"such a polite young man."*

She wasn't on his side initially, when they both walk in the front door dirty, cut up, and stinking of sewer. Maggie Tozier gapes at them.

Eddie, who is slightly purple, stained with the ectoplasm It spat all over him, toes off his shoes on the shoe mat, and leaves them tucked neatly against the wall, beside Richie's mom's red high heels.

"What has happened to you!? Have you lost your minds, being out this late? Why are you all dirty? Edward, your mother is probably worried sick!"

...And that's when Eddie starts to cry again. He covers his dirty face with his dirty hands and sobs into them. Her son turns to him, but doesn't touch him, doesn't say anything, just looks at him with sorrow in his face, and that sobers Maggie right up.

She straightens her posture. "Alright. Bath. For both of you. I'll bring you up some dinner."

Richie kicks off his sneakers and leaves them where they land. He pushes a hand into Eddie's back, and leads him straight up the stairs and to his room.

“And don’t get... whatever you’re covered in on the carpet!” She yells up the stairs.

Richie shuts them in the bathroom beside his room.

Eddie instinctually sits down, wherever is closest, which happens to be the lidded toilet seat. He’s filled with memories of when he was last in a bathroom, similar to this, pressed against the tile’s before he blacked out.

He rubs his eyes

“Okay.” Richie starts, “arms up, let’s get that shirt off and you can wash up first. I’ll find you some pyjamas.”

Eddie nods, still a little teary, but he feels better alone with Richie. He opens his eyes to see him at the sink, angrily scrubbing at his hands to keep him until he can shower. He’s less reminded of the scary moments in his own bathroom, and more of good times sleeping over here. Him and Richie bumping elbows as they brush their teeth, Richie cutting his own hair and Eddie holding a hand-mirror so he could snip at the crown of his head. Them laughing as Went & Maggie saw the mess and yelled at them over it.

Richie dries his hands and leans over Eddie. Eddie obediently lifts his arms straight up, and Richie peels the sticky, purple, sodden mess off of his cold skin. It gets stuck at his chin, making him stretch his neck up until it popped off his head, messing his hair.

Richie is staring at him, clutching the nasty t-shirt in his hand. Eddie doesn’t know why, so he crosses his arms across his chest in protection.

Richie sighs, reaching out to touch the side of Eddie’s neck. “What did he do to you...?”

Eddie recoils, standing and pushing past the other boy to get to the mirror. His neck hurt, sure, but he hadn’t thought much about about it until he saw.

His neck is a pale canvas, painted in blues and purples, drawn in the place of a hand print. Small cuts align the finger prints, from the

Clown's sharp nails. He remembers how they dug in. Red scratches top off the art It left him with, and he can't help but reach and cover it up, lower lip quivering.

He's suddenly very scared, and cold, and can actually feel the panic well up within him. Richie is still looking at him, eyes full of worry.

Eddie covers himself. "Can I stay here tonight?"

His friend nods hard, then pulls his eyes away from Eddie's war wounds. "I'll go tell my mom." And he leaves Eddie alone in the bathroom.

He showers with his casted arm hanging out the curtain.

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As he leaves the bathroom, he hears his mom talking.
"I have no idea," She breathes out. She must be on the phone.

Richie inches down a few stairs to look at her between the guardrails. She's leaning against the counter, the red land-line in her hand as she looks over her nails. "Well Sonia don't think I didn't see that big hand-slap on the side o' his face... — Uh huh. — Yeah I understand, and I ain't judgin', but I still think it's best he stay here tonight."

She sighs heavily, dragging the phone cord with her to the stove. She stirs a pot with a wooden spoon. "I don't know. They just came in here, all dirtied up, and shaken. I think it'd be best for them to stay together."

Richie smiles. Sometimes, his mom is on his side, and this is one of those times.

She reaches for some bowls from the middle shelf, then glances to the clock on the wall. Its 8:20. "9. I'll be sure of it." She tells the phone, and puts the bowls down to fill them with stew. "Okay, okay, alright. I'll have him call you right in the morning. Yes yes... Okay.

Goodnight.”

And with that, Richie rushes back upstairs to his room.

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He instantly feels better after the shower. He bundles in a towel and stands in front of the mirror, looking himself over. He’s got a bunch of little cuts and nicks all over, a bit of redness on his cheek where Bill had slapped him, but nothing too scary, other than his neck, which looks a little better with the caked dirt and blood washed away. He can feel the tightness at his throat, the skin attempting to heal. He hopes it looks better in the morning. Boy, his mother would have a cow if she saw.

He opens the bathroom door to find a pair of pyjamas on the floor. He pulls them in with his feet, closes the door again, and dresses. He and Richie share clothes all the time, and even though Richie’s gotten much taller, everything still fits him nicely, and he feels cozy and warm.

When he reemerges, he turns directly into Richie’s room, to find him and Maggie sat on his bed.

Maggie turns to him. “Did you see a *killer clown* too?”

Eddie pulls the neck of his t-shirt up, covering the marks there. He nods.

She rolls her eyes, turning back to her son. She grabs his face and makes him look straight at her. “What’d you take?”

“Nothing!” Richie hisses, throwing his arms up to knock her hands off. “I’m not high. I’m being serious.”

Maggie puts her hands to her own face — her temples, to be exact—and applies pressure. “So you went into the sewers... to find the “clown”... the clown that took Georgie Denbrough.”

Richie nods like this should be easy for her to understand.

She gives up.

“Eddie, c’mere baby, lemme have a look at’chu.”

Eddie swallows hard. She’s gonna see the marks at his neck and freak out. She’s gonna tell his mom and then he’s gonna have to go home and oh jeez he does not want to go home—

Before he can even get himself to walk to her, she pulls him by his — *Richie’s*— shirt. She paws at his face and looks over his cast, but nothing seems to catch her eye. *Maybe she didn’t notice his neck? Maybe the shirt hides it well enough?* To their right, Richie is chewing his nails in worry as she looks him over. She puts both hands on his shoulders and sighs.

“Okay.” She mutters. “Eat your stew. Rich, you go shower.”

And she stands. And she walks away.

Eddie looks to Richie. “Did she not see my neck?”

“Maybe... It’s all in our heads again?” Richie gulps. It makes Eddie uneasy.

Richie stands and comes over to him. He lifts his hand slowly, and moves it to Eddie’s neck. Eddie cringes, he doesn’t want *anyones* hands on him again. For some reason, he lets Richie tip his chin up, lets him fit his hand around his throat, around the hand print there, feels the blush spread to his cheeks as his eyes close, overwhelmed. When Richie removes his hand, he takes any pain that was there away with him.

When he opens his eyes, Richie is gone from the room. He has butterflies in his stomach, and an itching behind his eyes.

He sits down on Richie’s bed, quiet and cold, and obediently eats his stew.

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Richie is shaking his curls out and fluffing them with his hands and Eddie is watching. He wishes his mother would let him grow his hair long like that, but she says it would make him look like a girl, and he doesn't need that.

Richie pulls a t-shirt over his head as Eddie pulls up the covers, their tray of empty bowls on the floor now, and rolls towards the wall. The light switches off, but the curtains are still open, letting the street lights fill the room with swimming white light.

The bed dips as another body joins him under the covers. Richie is cold where Eddie is warm, having sat under the covers enjoying his stew while Richie cleaned up.

He can feel Richie watching him. Knows he's gonna ask something stupid that's gonna make Eddie all upset again.

"Does it hurt?" *There it is...*

Sighing, Eddie rolls back over to look at him. The street lights shine on the opposite wall, but are bright enough to cast shadows over the other boy's face. He looks so much... softer here. Without his glasses, without his hair flattened down until the curls that Eddie loves so much are no more, his freckles dark from the summer sun. Eddie's sure he, himself, probably looks stupid. All marked up, with that terrified look he's worn all summer still stuck to his face, not to mention the bruises on his neck — that's gotta be what Richie's asking about, — the ones Richie's mom couldn't see.

"No." He answers, reaching up to cover them.

Neither of them speak for a while. Eddie stares down into Richie's chest and closes his eyes, while he's sure Richie stares right at his face like the weirdo he is.

"Are you still scared?" Eddie whispers.

Richie seems to think on that. "Yeah..." He replies, turning to lay on

his back. Eddie looks at the side of his face.

“Can I...” Eddie starts, unsure how to ask this, because *can I cuddle with you* is a little bit weird. Even with these circumstances. “Lay with you?”

Eyebrows lifting, Richie turns to him. “Are you not laying with me right now?”

Eddie fights the urge to punch him, roll away and fall asleep cold. “No, like can I, *lay with you* lay with you...?”

A warm smile floods Richie’s face. “You wanna snuggle!?”

“No, gross.” Eddie laughs, pushing his arm.

“Ahh, c’mere, Ed’ster.” Richie rings, grabbing him and pulling them together.

(Richie Tozier is not exactly someone u can hold in your arms. The boy is a ball of light, always moving, scattering, jumping off the walls. We all know this.)

But he tries. He becomes still and lets Eddie curl up against him, his casted arm tucked into himself while Richie’s arms loop him. Eddie lets out an audible sigh of relief.

(Eddie Kaspbrak, on the other hand, can be held. If you quiet him enough, explain how it's all gonna go down, how much he clearly needs it; he'll sink like a stone into whoever is near. He puts all his weight onto you, cuddles right up, makes himself at home within your skin. He becomes soft and pliant, and will most likely be asleep by the time you ask if he's comfortable enough.)

Eddie digs his face into Richie’s boney chest, wrapping his good arm around him in a loose hug. He feels so much *better* and yet so scared. He tightens his arm around his friend and keeps him as close as they can get.

Richie pets his back and his good arm.

“What if he comes back,” Eddie whispers.

Richie pushes his face into his semi-wet hair. “Then we’ll fight again. We’re all still together, we’re still stronger than him.” He thinks the movement of stroking up and down Eddie’s arm is probably more calming for him than it is for Eddie, but he continues it. “You gave me quite the scare.” He chuckles.

Shaking his head into Richie’s chest, Eddie begins to feel teary again. “He told me he killed you. All of you guys. Said because I was down there, he was able to make you guys float.”

“He didn’t though. We kicked his ass.”

“But he could have...”

“But he didn’t.” Richie presses. Stopping the rubbing to squeeze him.

Eddie wipes his face against Richie’s shirt. “I’m still so *scared*.”

“I know.” Richie replies, “me too.” He sighs and rubs a hand over Eddie’s hair. “But we’re gonna be okay.”

This version of Richie is new to Eddie. This is a serious, noble creature that replaced the kid he used to know. This whole Clown thing turned Richie into a man, and Eddie into a child.

Eddie rests his head while Richie presses his mouth to his hair. “We’re gonna be okay.”

And maybe if only for that moment, it seemed like he was telling the truth.

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“Oh gosh yes, they were asleep by 8:30!” Maggie cries into the phone—the handheld this time—as she searches the house for her keys. She’s already late, it’s 9:05 and she still hasn’t even taken her curlers out.

“Who are you talking to this early?” Went asks from behind his coffee mug and newspaper, enjoying watching his wife rush around.

“Sonia Kaspbrak,” she tells him, then covers the microphone with her shoulder, “Eddie slept over and *you know how she gets*.”

“Eddie slept over?”

“Went didn't hear them either, so they musta' slept right through the night.” Maggie tells her, back on the phone.

She finds her keys on the coffee table and stuffs them in her purse. “Okay sure, I'll go check on them right now.” She shakes her purse flask to make sure its full —it is— and goes upstairs to take the curlers out.

She peaks into Richie's room. “Okay, they're still sleeping but... Oh! Oh my goodness Sonia you have to see this!”

Went can almost hear Sonia screaming through the phone. “No, no! Nothing like that. They're...” She covers her smile with her long fingers, equipped with neon pink fake nails. “They're all snuggled up. It's just adorable. I need my camera!”

She runs out of the room, definitely late now, to search for it. “You know, one of these days, they'll invent a phone with a camera build right in! Two in one!”

Notes for the Chapter:

2500 words in one chapters?? *heyyyyyy,,, thats pretty good!*

anyways. thank you for waiting, but we're finally done! i hope you love little boy cuddles as much as i do. also idk who richie's mom is... but for some reason i pictured her as a southern belle. lol.

the feedback for this fic has been incredible. i'm blown away. every time i get an email from ao3 i get so excited to respond to comments and such. you guys are so wonderful.

please hmu on tumblr, @ghostycas, i'd love love love

to chat and this is also where u can send prompts
and such! i looove that shit.
as always, I'm sending all the love and positive vides
i can your way.
xoxo, j

(Edit 09/12/19: omg how did everyone like ch2? i
personally felt really satisfied and i enjoyed it a lot!!!
thank you to all my new friends reading and
kudosing. we're at 10k hits which is kinda
nauseating.
luv u guys. send me ur fav reddie 2019 fic i'll die ok)